

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here with my distinguished colleagues, including the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GONZALEZ), who led us in this endeavor this evening. Our Hispanic community appreciates the work of our leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Gonzales), the chairman of the Hispanic Civil Rights Task Force.

Mr. RODRIQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GONZALEZ) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) for being here tonight and just indicate that we will not support anyone blindly and we expect them to move forward on answering the questions.

SHAMEFUL TREATMENT FOR OUR VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 6 minutes, which is the balance of the leadership hour, as the further designee of the minority leader.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I come to this Chamber tonight, and I enjoyed listening to my colleagues talk about this important court nominee. But I wanted to talk about another issue that is important to the American people, and that is the way this government and especially this administration is treating our veterans. I bring this chart to this Chamber as I did last night to illustrate the fact that if a veteran goes to a veterans hospital today and looks upon a bulletin board, they are likely to see this notice. It says: Did you know the medication copayment has changed from \$2 to \$7. Just about a year ago, the VA decided that they were going to increase the copayment that a veteran must pay for their medicine from \$2 a prescription to \$7 a prescription.

And at that time, I thought it was an outrageous act, that we would impose this additional financial burden upon our veterans.

But looking at the President's budget which he just released for 2004, he just released it a few days ago, they do not want to charge \$7 a prescription as a copay, but they are actually suggesting that this be increased to \$15 a prescription.

Now, think about that. At a time when we are preparing to send America's young men and women into a war, we are treating our veterans, those who have fought past wars, those who have served our country with honor, we are charging them more for the medicines they need to stay healthy or to simply maintain their lives. From \$2 a prescription to \$7 a prescription, and now, in the President's budget, \$15 a prescription. Many veterans take 10 or more prescriptions a month. That is a lot of money, and many of our veterans are on fixed incomes.

Now, in the President's budget for 2004, he is also calling for an elimination of the taxation on dividends. About \$674 billion, if that plan is enacted, about \$674 billion will go to the richest people in this country, millionaires, multimillionaires. Why would we charge veterans more for their medicines while, at the same time, we are proposing to give \$674 billion to the richest people in this country? Not only has the VA decided to raise the cost of medicine, but they have also decided in the President's budget to raise the cost of going to an outpatient clinic for care to see a doctor, from \$15 to \$20. Why would we raise the cost that a veteran must pay simply to go to see a doctor when, at the same time, we are giving \$674 billion to the richest people in this country?

About a year ago, the VA put out a memo, and this memo went out to all other health care providers across this Nation. And it basically said, too many veterans are coming to our facilities for services. It is costing us too much money, so you are no longer able to market the services that veterans are entitled to receive. It is a gag order. They are actually telling the health care providers across this country that you cannot tell veterans what they are entitled to receive under the law. They were quite specific in their memo. They told these health care providers that they could no longer participate in community health fairs. They could no longer send out newsletters describing their services. They could no longer go to an American Legion post and sign up veterans for the services that they, under the law, are entitled to receive. I call it the "if they don't ask, we won't tell" policy. If the veteran does not ask what they are entitled to receive, the VA will not tell them what they are entitled to receive.

Then, a few weeks ago, the VA decided that they would do something else to save money. They decided to create a new priority group called Priority Group 8, and if you are a veteran and you make about \$26,000 or \$27,000 a year, you are no longer going to be permitted to enroll in the VA health care system. And under the President's budget, they are really suggesting that there be an annual enrollment fee imposed upon veterans, a brand-new enrollment fee. If you make \$24,000 a year and you are a veteran, they are asking that you pay \$250 a year just to enroll in the VA health care system.

Now, I do not think \$24,000 is a lot, and people out there in the rest of the world need to know that those of us who serve here in this Chamber make about \$150,000 or so a year. Mr. Speaker, \$24,000 is not a lot. But in the President's budget, if a veteran makes \$24,000 a year, they will be required to pay a \$250 annual enrollment fee just to participate in the VA health care system.

Why are we doing this? Why do we not take part of that \$674 billion that we are giving to the richest people in

this country and use it to provide health care for our veterans? It is simply the right thing to do.

THE UNITED NATIONS, NATO, IRAQ, AND MIGUEL ESTRADA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, this evening I want to address a couple of areas. The primary focus of my comments this evening will be on the United Nations, on NATO, and Iraq. But I cannot allow some of the comments that I have just heard in the last 45 minutes to go un rebutted, so I intend to take a few minutes here at the very beginning to rebut some of the remarks that were made.

I was a witness to a very aggressive personal attack on an individual called Mr. Estrada, and I can tell my colleagues that had Mr. Estrada been a Member of the United States Congress, the Speaker behind me would have ruled those kinds of comments out of order by the time they got to the second sentence, because they were so vicious and such a personal attack. It was not even a fair fight. Speaker after speaker after speaker stood up in front of all of us, just a few minutes ago, and while attacking Mr. Estrada, said, this is not a partisan issue, but yet it was Democrat after Democrat after Democrat after Democrat. They did not invite anybody else in to speak on the other side of the issue. Not at all. In fact, the statement was made by the gentlewoman from the State of California that, in fact, they had been very aggressive just to prove that they were not being partisan, just to prove that they were not attacking Mr. Estrada because he happens to be a Republican and a conservative Republican.

Just to prove that, the gentlewoman from California said we aggressively stood up in support of a Hispanic who was recently named to the bench, apparently in the State of California. I would just tell the gentlewoman from California, I have been here almost every night during Special Orders, and I have never seen, never seen her or any of her other colleagues who spoke this evening take that podium and speak in favor of this Hispanic judge or this Hispanic in California who happened to be a Republican and that they say adamantly and bravely stood up and spoke for.

I tell you what else I find a particular interest from the gentlewoman from California who, by the way, I consider a professional. In fact, I am surprised by the comments that I heard coming out of my colleagues this evening because I happen to have watched my colleagues over the time that I have worked with them, and I think they are pretty sharp people. I think they are very capable. I was surprised tonight at these remarks.

But back to the gentlewoman from California who, as I mentioned earlier, I think is a professional. I work on a committee with her. She made a comment about the right to vote, how hard the Hispanic community worked to get the right to vote, and I agree with her. But do we have a double standard here, when one party stands up and talks about the right to vote on one hand and yet on the other hand works in unison with the other body to deny the right to vote? We see what is going on here is a filibuster. They are afraid to have a vote on Mr. Estrada.

□ 2100

Every one of these people, every one of those Democrats who voted this evening, sometime during their comments talked about the right to vote for Hispanics. And yet they stand here and in support of the denial of the right for a vote for Mr. Estrada.

Hey, let Mr. Estrada rise and fall on his own merits. Let the vote take place. That is what is being requested.

I am not here to try to convince my colleagues on the Democratic side that they need to support Mr. Estrada, but I am here saying it is incumbent, it is incumbent upon these Democrats to at least allow a vote on Mr. Estrada. If they want to vote no, if the Senate or the other body votes no, so be it. It fell on its own merits. But at least it got a vote.

So if you are going to stand here this evening and talk about the right to vote and how strongly your community, and I agree with that comment, how strongly your community worked to obtain equal status to get that right to vote, to be recognized as citizens, then on one hand, as you preach that you should, on the other hand, follow your own preaching and allow that vote to take place.

Let me make a couple of other comments in regards to that. I heard the thought that he is not qualified. He came to the Hispanic Caucus. I heard the chairman of the Democratic Caucus, comment after comment after comment assailed Mr. Estrada, attacked personally Mr. Estrada. And what surprised me is time after time I heard a very partisan Democratic attack that Mr. Estrada was not qualified.

Now, very few of these people speaking this evening ever went to law school, very few of these people ever practiced in a court of law. And let me say their focus on there is from the Democratic side. I am a Republican. So I tend to, obviously, I favor Republicans. That is the nature of the game. But in order to kind of neutralize, in order to look over the partisanship, we have another player in this game, and it is called the American Bar Association. And the American Bar Association evaluates not based on party affiliation, but evaluates the qualifications of a particular candidate. And Mr. Estrada was no exception.

They did not evaluate Mr. Estrada on whether or not he was Hispanic. They

did not evaluate Mr. Estrada on whether or not he was a Republican. They did not evaluate Mr. Estrada based on whether or not he was a Democrat. They evaluated Mr. Estrada on his qualifications to serve as a judge on an appellate level. They are the most non-partisan evaluation you have out there. In fact, in my opinion I think they are too liberally based.

But the fact is, the opinion that they issued, which was never even mentioned once during this vicious attack this evening by the Democrats and the Democratic leadership over here, and I say Democrats, that is too general, a very small group of Democrats and some leadership, they never even mentioned what the American Bar Association did.

By now your curiosity is probably up. Well, Congressman MCINNIS, what kind of evaluation did they come out with? They gave him an evaluation that rated its highest recommendation they issued, highest recommendation they issue. Why do you not, if you want to fight fair, why do you not bring out the facts? You ought to say, you know, we disagree with this, but the American Bar Association did say, did give their highest qualifications to Mr. Estrada. That is only fair.

Let me mention another thing that I think is a little remarkable for its lack, and that is that Mr. Estrada has no experience as a judge. You know what, there were some Congressmen this evening who were making those statements who had no experience, previous elected experience, or certainly did not have any of the experience at the level of being a United States Congressman before they were elected to the United States Congress. Yet, in my opinion, although it has been somewhat discounted this evening, in my opinion, those individuals who spoke were very qualified to be United States congressional people.

You know, I do not know what the background is, but I do not think the gentlewoman from the State of California held elective office prior to this that was equivalent to the United States Congress; yet, she is a very capable individual. And it is the same with any of a number of those individuals. They are capable, but they did not have to come in here with this prior experience.

And yet you turn around, while you lack that prior experience yourself, and serve in the United Congress, you turn around and assail, viciously assail, Mr. Estrada because he "does not have the experience."

Keep in mind, one, what you are supporting this evening through that tirade of comments was, you were supporting the effort to not allow a vote. Not you in the same boat, no. The effort you were supporting is, do not ever give him a chance to have a vote.

My position, whether you are Republican or Democrat, my position is, let Mr. Estrada rise and fall on his own merits. Allow him the vote. If you be-

lieve, as apparently you do, that for some reason, although the American Bar Association said he is highly qualified, you think you are more educated in your evaluation.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina). The gentleman will suspend.

The gentleman will refrain from urging the Senate to take action.

Mr. MCINNIS. I stand corrected, Mr. Speaker.

Yet my colleagues over here who think that they can evaluate better than the American Bar Association are making an effort to deny the vote.

So, in summary on this, let me say, number one, let me say there was no need for that vicious, one-sided attack this evening. It was very partisan in its nature. It was not a fair fight and at least you ought to be fair. I think Mr. Estrada can stand up and lose the fight if he gets a fair fight. You did not even give him a fair fight.

In fact, you did not know I was coming this evening. I did not expect to make comments in this regard. But I felt that attack was so vicious and double standards were being utilized that somebody has to speak up for Mr. Estrada on this House floor.

By the way, I have never met Mr. Estrada. I would not know him if he walked in the door right here. There is no reason for me to stand up and defend him here tonight other than the fact that it was a one-sided attack by a small group of Democrats and their Democratic leadership, and that is fundamentally unfair. And it is fundamentally unfair for a group to work against a vote being taken, to deny that right to vote after they preach to us.

You were preaching, my colleagues were preaching to us about how hard they have worked in their community, and which, by the way, I agree with, their community worked hard to be sure that they had the right to exercise a vote. And yet on one hand you say, we have a right and we worked hard in our community to exercise the vote. But on the other hand, do not allow the vote for Mr. Estrada; but although the American Bar Association says he is qualified, we do not think he is qualified. And although we do not think he has experience, we did not have any experience before we came in the United States Congress. For some reason, it is okay for us, but it is not okay for Mr. Estrada. And by the way, we will do it on the House floor where nobody stands in defense of Mr. Estrada.

I find myself here not even knowing Mr. Estrada but feeling you are picking on the little guy, and it is not a fair fight.

I am willing to stand up to you. I know you out number me 10 to 1 tonight. I know you came here speaker after speaker after speaker, first giving a disclaimer that it was not partisan

and then of course the rest of your comments were completely partisan.

So I am standing up for him. And I think he ought to have a vote. And I think you ought to take into consideration or at least say to the people when you make your comments, by the way, while I disagree with Mr. Estrada, you should know that the American Bar Association gave him its highest evaluation of what they think is required to serve as a judge on the appellate level in the Federal Government.

Enough. Enough of that.

I need to talk this evening and spend some time with my colleagues on the situation that is occurring in NATO, the situation at the United Nations, the situation in Iraq. I think at the very beginning it is important to distinguish between the United Nations and NATO.

NATO, of course, is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It is a family. It is a strong defense alliance built between America and its European neighbors. It is an alliance that is like a close-knit family. It is an alliance that has gone to war as an alliance, as in Kosovo. It is an alliance in which, like blood brothers, like blood brothers, you make the commitment when you join that alliance that a fight with anybody in the alliance, a fight upon any individual country within the alliance is a fight with the entire alliance. And for 50-some years that alliance, NATO, has stood strongly.

In the last 2 weeks we have had a breakup in the family. We have had a couple of members of the family, three members to be specific, who, despite the fact that the family has coddled them for 50-some years, despite the fact that the family has put their arms around them in a time of need, despite the fact that members of NATO like the United States of America, like on D-Day, put their arms around France and helped France. It was not Iraq that went to help France. It was not Iraq that was in Kosovo helping France. It is not Iraq and Korea helping South Korea. It is not Iraq out there doing anything for France other than selling them oil. And France left.

One of our family members has left, in my opinion, in part due to a business deal. It has shaken the entire foundation of the organization we know as NATO. And while we start let me mention, I just want to quote from an article, this is off Yahoo, New York Post, it is an op-ed piece, so I am quoting from the op-ed piece, "Mr. Howard Served in D-Day."

He is an American, an American citizen. He did not have a bone to pick, but he decided to go to answer the call for his country to fight for France, and this is what he said: "We were men of war and men of honor. The turncoats making policy in Paris and Berlin," speaking to what has happened in the last 2 weeks, "do not know the meaning of the words," referring to the words "men of war, men of honor." France was in trouble. Excuse me, let me step back.

Mr. Howard remembers why our young men went to war. He says, "France was in trouble and all of us had to do something about it. Simple as that." "France was in trouble and all of us had to do something about it. Simple as that. With this anti-American thing going on, I tell people loud and clear, I am an American, first and last. You got a problem? I think we all did our bit back then."

Now what has happened. Let me just take a look because there is a perception out there from the world-wide media. They sensed for obvious reasons that there is a breakup in the family, that a family that nobody thought they would ever see a crack in, a family that has had a strong history of partnership for 50-some years all of the sudden, in a matter of hours, suffered a major break. And the perception out there is that it is a fight between the United States of America and France and Germany.

It is not a split between the United States of America and France and Germany and Belgium. It is a division in Europe. Let me show you.

I have a chart to my left and I would like to refer you to the chart. I am going to circle the three members of the family. Let me first of all point out on the chart the members of the family. Take a look: United States, Portugal, Norway, Italy, Greece, Denmark, we have 19 of them, Turkey, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Iceland, Germany, Canada, Czech Republic, Spain, Poland, Luxembourg, France and Belgium. That is the family. I am introducing you to our family in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

And by the way, it is not the North Atlantic Treaty Organization that would be engaged in the conflict in an offensive fashion against Iraq. The issue with Iraq is separate from NATO. That is being handled by another unit called the United Nations and primarily through their Security Council.

□ 2115

Back to our family at NATO. All of these family members agree with this exception: Germany, France and Belgium.

My point in referring my colleagues to the posters is I would like my colleagues to see that it is not a split, an even split in the family. It is not even close to an even split in the family. Sixteen members of this family support another member and let me tell my colleagues who that other member is. That other member is the most moderate Muslim country in the world.

That other member, which is the country of Turkey, is a country that time and time and time again has come to the alliance and assisted the alliance. That is a member despite the pressure, and talk about pressure, France and Germany and Belgium have never seen pressure like the Turks have. Time and time again the Turks have been under intense pressure from some of the more radical countries in

the Middle East to walk away from NATO. They have looked at Turkey and said how dare you stand with the United States of America, how dare you stand with Great Britain, how dare you stand with the Netherlands or Iceland or Canada or Greece or Italy or Spain. What are you doing in that organization?

But the Turks have stood tall. Time and time again the Turks have delivered to the family. Time and time again the Turks have proven that they are not only a stable, but they are probably one of the strongest members of the family, and time and time again the Turks have come to the assistance of the other members. It is like the big brother, always there to help. That is a good description of Turkey. That is not an accurate description of France or of Germany or of Belgium, but Turkey's always been there to help.

With the situation in Iraq, it appears because of remarks and indications that Saddam Hussein has made that the country of Iraq could very easily decide they want to pick a fight with Turkey and blindly attack Turkey with weapons, possibly weapons of mass destruction. For the first time in the alliance of NATO, Turkey has come under what we call section 4 of NATO. For the first time Turkey has come and invoked section 4, and they are the big brother who has always helped us, has now come into the family house and said can you help me.

Turkey has said can you help me, and you know what the brothers and sisters in that family house have said? The United States said, yes, and by the way, the United States now says if NATO will not stand up for you because of the actions of France and Belgium and Germany, we will. The United States, just be aware anybody in the world, you take on Turkey and we consider it a direct attack against the United States of America, and we will respond accordingly with overwhelming superiority.

But when the family was asked to pitch in and help Turkey, the United States stepped forward and they said yes. Portugal stepped forward and they said yes. Norway stood forward and they said yes. Italy stood forward and they said yes. Greece stepped forward and they said yes. Denmark stepped forward and they said yes. The United Kingdom obviously stepped forward and said yes. The Netherlands stepped forward and said yes. Iceland stepped forward and said yes. Canada stepped forward and said yes. The Czech Republic stood forward and said yes.

What is really neat about some of this, some of these countries are our little brothers and sisters. They are very small as far as military might, but they are very, very small countries; but by gosh, they stood forward and said we are going to help our brother Turkey. We are going to give it the best we got. Spain stepped forward and said yes. Poland stepped forward

and said yes. Luxembourg, little reluctant, slow, yes. Hungary stepped forward and said yes.

But then some of the most prominent, some of the biggest members of the family, to the shock of every other member of the family, to the shock of the brothers, to our brothers and sisters, France stepped forward and said not only no, not only maybe, we will abstain from this, maybe we will stay in the house while you go out to help our brother Turkey. France stepped forward and said I am going to veto the right for you to help Turkey in any way. I am going to veto to make sure NATO cannot get out of the door of the house to go help our brother Turkey. Germany did the same thing. Shame on them. Belgium.

Remember what I told you about Mr. Howard, about what Mr. Howard said on D-day. France was in trouble and all of us had to do something about it. Simple as that. We were men of war. We were men of honor. It was that simple. Our brother France, it was in trouble. That is what Mr. Howard talks about, D-day, and yet how quickly and how shamefully the French and the Germans and the Belgians forget not what the United States did for them, although what we have done for that country whether it is the Marshall Plan or Hitler or bringing down the Wall, you cannot count all the assistance we have given to those countries, but speaking much more broadly than the United States, this assistance came from their fellow member of NATO, and in the last week, they shocked the family by saying we are not going to participate, we are not going to help Turkey.

How can they do that? I mean, it is like looking at your brother and saying how can you betray the family, how can you walk out on us like that, in a time of need, without warning? You walk out on the family. This has nothing to do with Iraq. That is not the issue here in front of NATO. That is the issue in front of the United Nations Security Council. Why are you using Iraq as a cover to defy your brother? Why are you walking out on your family? Why do you do this? What do you have to gain?

Have you made the choice that instead of putting your investment, your commitment with the people who have stood beside you for 50 years, whether it is Portugal or Spain or Italy or Hungary or Iceland, instead of putting your commitment with these people, you are now choosing to put your commitment with Saddam Hussein and Iraq? You are walking out of our family, not only the insult of leaving our family in a time of need, France and Germany and Belgium; but you are going across the street to help one of the worst men in the history of this world.

It is unanswerable unless, unless you begin to look a little deeper. Then you find out that the French signed an agreement with the Iraq government for the right to explore an oil field that

they believe has 40 billion barrels of oil in it at a discounted price. Iraq knows that if they can win the public relations war, Iraq knows that maybe they can break America because America may not have enough guts to act without the French or without Germany.

If France and Germany, let us just say that the oil that they are getting from Iraq and the arms that they are selling to Iraq, and Germany's in there, too, and so is Belgium, let us just say that that is not the reason for leaving the family. If the reason for leaving the family is they do not want to go to war and somehow they tie NATO into the war, again, it is not the NATO issue with Iraq. It is the United Nations that is dealing with Iraq, two separate institutions, but if that is their concern, they, in fact, are making the war more likely, the probability of war higher because of the fact that they are now presenting a broken front, a nonunified family, a broken family.

The best way to settle this peacefully is stand nose to nose with Saddam Hussein with a unified international community that says disarm and disarm now.

The President of the United States has made this very clear. The President and Prime Minister of Italy has made this very clear. The Prime Minister of Great Britain has made this very clear. Many, many people throughout this world are willing to stand as a unified team as the President and Colin Powell says or the Vice President and Mr. Rumsfeld or Condoleezza Rice, with a coalition of the willing.

Every time France needed something, NATO became the coalition of the willing. Every time Germany or Belgium needed something, it was NATO that was ready to stand up to the plate. That was the deal. We are blood brothers. We made a commitment, a solemn commitment 50 years ago, and we have stood in honor only to be disgraced by the countries that we, America or many of these countries, we lost on D-day. It is stunning to the international community that NATO, which was perceived as probably the strongest alliance in the world of a multiple nation makeup would, in fact, be defied by its own family.

So let me say to my colleagues, this is not light discussions which are taking place right now. I, under the fine leadership of the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER), who is the chairman of the parliamentary arm of the House for NATO, I am a member of that. I have been a member of that for a long time. I have witnessed the family. I know what a good family it is.

Tomorrow or the next day we will depart for NATO meetings, and I intend to be as strong in my comments in front of the French and the Germans and the Belgians as I am with my colleagues this evening. This is a serious rift. No one should take it lightly. The message I will deliver to the French and to the Germans and to the Bel-

gians is, for God's sake, think about what you are doing. Think about the family that you are about to walk out on. Be selfish for a minute and think about your own future. Be totally selfish and think about is your future better with your brothers and sisters in the NATO alliance? Is your future better with Poland and the United Kingdom and the United States and Hungary and Spain and Italy and any number of these countries, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Canada? Is your future better with them or is your future better with the country of Iraq? I mean, it is so basic and yet so fundamental to the survival of this family.

Let me say that this split in the European community, France wants to be the big dog, France wants to always lead the parade. France wants to be the head of the EU and Germany wants to be France's little buddy.

Let me say, in my opinion, NATO will suffer from this but what will suffer the most is the investment that France and Germany and Belgium, the investment they are making with Iraq. They will suffer the most in the long run for they will find out you cannot deal with a madman. You cannot deal with a killer. You cannot appease, you cannot appease a cold-blooded killer who not only invaded two other countries, two of his neighbors, but also in cold blood used weapons of mass destruction, chemical gases, to kill his own people.

You are being dealt a bad hand, and I am going to say to the French and to the German and the Belgian colleagues, look at the hand that you have been dealt. You have got a great hand. You have got a hand that is shared by 16 other nations who have been with you for 50 years; and whether you have got a good hand or a bad hand, we have always been there and you have got a good hand right now, and you are about to throw it on the table and give it to the person who showed up, who does not have the best interests of anybody but himself, Saddam Hussein, in mind.

Let us move again, as I said earlier, we have the United Nations which we are going to speak about right now and we have NATO. My comments up to this point have been focused specifically on NATO, keeping in mind that the issue in front of NATO is not the issue of Iraq. The issue in front of NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, clearly is do we or do we not go to the assistance of one of our members, that is, the country of Turkey, which has invoked section 4, which requests help from its different colleagues? Do we, an organization that has been a solid family for 50-some years, do we in fact work to continue that family or should in fact NATO, the issue now in front of us, is our family now broken because three of our members, the Belgians, the French and the Germans have refused to honor their lifelong commitment, their blood brother commitment to stick with us?

□ 2130

That is NATO. The issue is not Iraq. The issue is, do we help Turkey, which faces imminent threat from Iraq? The issue is, do we or do we not help Turkey?

I can say for sure that America will help Turkey. And every one of those 16 countries voted to go immediately to assist Turkey. And France and Germany and Belgium, your failure to act will not cause a weakness for our friends, the country of Turkey. We will act.

The rest of the members of NATO, despite your veto threat, and unfortunately we will have to act outside the body of NATO, but whether it is a truck, whether it is a prayer, whether it is medics or mechanics or the military might of the United States and the British, we will protect Turkey. And you, France, and you, Belgium, and you, Germany, will see this as one of the largest and most significant mistakes of your country's history.

Now, let us move to the United Nations and talk just for a moment about the United Nations. The United Nations, really when it comes to the issue of Iraq, and keep in mind the United Nations has about 189 members, I may be off one or two, but 189 countries or so. North Korea, for example, is in the United Nations. We have a number of different countries which are completely opposite of the United States and of the free world, in my opinion, in the United Nations. But we are not talking about the whole body. The real focus we have today, dealing with the problem of Iraq, dealing with the problem of weapons of mass destruction, dealing with the problem of, for example, North Korea and proliferation of nuclear weapons, that primarily focuses on the Security Council of the United Nations.

I wanted very quickly, if you look to my left at the poster, the United Nations Security Council, these are the members of the Security Council. These members, for example Russia, can carry a veto and prevent the United Nations from taking action as a body. For example, the Kosovo air war. The head of the Security Council persuaded the United Nations to oppose an air war in Kosovo. So it is a powerful body, but it is a powerful body within the scope of the United Nations.

This is the body of which we were in hopes would be strong enough, have tough enough teeth that it could bite into the problem and hold on to it after the Persian Gulf War of 12 or 13 years ago. It was the United Nations which issued the resolution, led by the United States and the joint members of the United Nations, to take action, to free Kuwait after Iraq overran Kuwait without cause, conquered its country, destroyed its oil wells, killed tens, maybe hundreds of thousands of people in the country of Kuwait. It was the United Nations that issued a resolution supporting military conflict, if necessary, to free the country of Kuwait.

It was the United Nations that kept the United States and the British, because we decided to be Mr. Nice Guy. We thought the United Nations could do something with Iraq after the Persian Gulf War, which was an overwhelming victory for the allies and America because of our military superiority. We had confidence, now as it appears, misplaced confidence, but we had confidence that the United Nations could help us rebuild Iraq through a series of resolutions, through a series of inspections, through disarming Iraq.

The United Nations assured us 12 years ago to not go in and exterminate, do not go in and destroy or eliminate Saddam Hussein. Stay out of Baghdad. It was the United Nations. It was not George Bush, Sr., who made the decision. It was not Margaret Thatcher and the United Kingdom who made the decision to stay out of Baghdad. It was not Norman Schwarzkopf who decided not to go into Baghdad. It was the United Nations who insisted that our mandate was simply to get Iraq out of Kuwait, to not go into the city limits of Baghdad and take down the regime of Saddam Hussein.

So we agreed to it because we were under the mistaken trust that the United Nations meant what they said. We were under the mistaken belief that the United Nations would carry through with its resolutions, that the United Nations, through its Security Council, would be sure that the resolutions that Saddam Hussein agreed in his own writing to follow, even proposed some of these resolutions.

We were confident. That may be too strong a word. We were cautiously optimistic that the United Nations would not be a paper tiger, that the United Nations, within a short period of time, would disarm Iraq of these weapons of mass destruction. We knew of munitions that Iraq had, and we were cautiously optimistic that Iraq, through the United Nations, would disarm and become a member of the world community.

It was a big mistake, and it is proving today that the United Nations itself does not have the gumption to do what it says. And it is the United Nations, not the United States, it is the United Nations that is on the brink of becoming what we call a paper tiger, an organization in the West they say is a cowboy with a big hat but no cows. The United Nations is right on the brink of making that decision. Do we once again become a paper tiger?

Now, let us look a little at the history. First of all, what kind of weapons are we talking about in Iraq? Are we talking about these missiles we discovered in the last few days that have a range that exceeds the maximum range that Iraq agreed they would restrict these missiles to? Are we talking about the shell casings that Iraq denied that they still had? What are we talking about?

Let me show you an inventory of what we are talking about and why we

think it is important for the United Nations to not become a paper tiger. Again, let me refer you to my left. This is not what the United States or the Brits or any other ally says that Iraq has. This poster to my left does not reflect what the United Nations says Iraq has; this poster reflects what Iraq, what Saddam Hussein said he had. That is what this poster reflects. Take a look at it.

Weapons of mass destruction: Mustard gas, 2,850 tons of mustard gas. That stuff is lethal, and I am going to show you case after case after case where Iraq, under Saddam Hussein, used these weapons of mass destruction either against his war in Iran or against Kuwaitis or against his own people.

Sarin nerve gas, 795 tons. Do you realize what you could do to America or to Canada or to Portugal or to any neighbor of Iraq with 795 tons of sarin nerve gas?

VX nerve gas, 3.9 tons. This is a very, very vicious weapon of mass destruction. The last two words describe it most accurately, mass destruction.

Tabun nerve agent, 210 tons.

Anthrax, 25,000 tons. Now, we all have an idea of what anthrax does because of the anthrax attack we had here in the Nation's Capital. That killed servants of this country. That killed people serving this country with just a few drops of powder in an envelope.

He, under his own admission, has 25,000 tons of anthrax. He has 400 tons of uranium and he has 6 grams of plutonium. Under his own admission, he has these weapons of mass destruction.

Now, we do not know where he has them. He agreed, by the way, to destroy them. He agreed to turn these over to the allies. By the way, you do not just destroy them. You do not just go out and set them on fire. You have to go through a very complicated process to disarm these.

He has become an expert at sensing that the United Nations may be really nothing but a paper tiger, that it may follow the history of the League of Nations, which was charged with the responsibility, almost in a duplicate situation with Germany after World War I, to disarm Germany, and they backed down. Germany lied, and Germany, in fact, had weapons they said they did not have. The League of Nations did not enforce inspections. The League of Nations became a paper tiger, and Germany became a war machine. Unfortunately, many of us suffered. Many of our countries suffered during World War II.

The United Nations is heading down that direct path because they refuse to disarm Iraq. Instead, they are going to play this cat-and-mouse game.

Well, our President, thank goodness for our President, who has said enough is enough. He said earlier it is like a bad movie and he is not interested in seeing the rerun. You know what the

rerun is? Let me show you what President Bush does not want to see a rerun of. Again, the poster to my left.

President Bush does not want to see a rerun of August of 1983, where mustard gas killed no fewer than 100 people. He does not want to see a rerun of February 1986, where Saddam Hussein used mustard gas and tabun and killed 8,000 to 10,000 people. President Bush does not want to see a rerun of the October 1983 attack, where Saddam Hussein used mustard gas to kill 3,000 Iranians and Kurds. President Bush does not want to see a rerun of the December 1986 act by Saddam Hussein, mustard gas, where he killed thousands of Iranians. That is the rerun President Bush does not want to see.

Unfortunately, the person we would call "the dove," the person least likely to urge this country to go into a military conflict, is Colin Powell, a man of high integrity, highest popularity rating in the United States of America because they know this is a man of integrity, and he has said enough is enough.

Take a look at the team we have. President Bush put together the A Squad. We have DICK CHENEY, one of the most qualified Vice Presidents in the history of this country. Condoleezza Rice. By the way, DICK CHENEY is just north of us in Wyoming. The President from Texas. Condoleezza Rice schooled in Denver, Colorado. Condoleezza Rice, one of the brightest, most capable people in the area of international affairs, world affairs. Don Rumsfeld, one of the toughest guys I have ever met; one of the smartest men I have ever had the privilege to visit with. And, of course, Colin Powell.

These people do not want to see a rerun. These people, and every Member of the United States Congress ought to be standing up strong and saying to the United Nations, do not let this happen to any more generations, to any more people in the world. United Nations, you have the opportunity today, you have the opportunity today to make sure that this movie, which is reflected on the poster to my left, will never be rerun again; that no other family in the history of the world will suffer from the hands of Saddam Hussein by a weapon of mass destruction.

It is an inherent obligation of the world to stand up to this tyrant and to stop him. Yet, as we are on the verge of that, I fear that this tyrant is winning a public relations, a public relations effort with the United Nations, and the United Nations itself is about to become an unimportant organization because they did not stand up when standing up was called for. They did not answer to the call of duty when the most important call of duty came forward. They blinked. They blinked to the madman. They attempted to appease him.

Look at history. History is a teacher. I do not care what history teacher in America you pick. Any history teacher you want, of any political affiliation, whether prowar, antiwar, pro-this or

anti-that, there is one thing they all share in common. Every history professor in America shares one thing in common. What is it they share in common? They share in common that the knowledge of history gives you a pretty good idea of the future: That history is often repeated, that history repeats itself.

To my left is the poster of history. It is the history of Saddam Hussein and the weapons of mass destruction. Not weapons that he has threatened to use, but weapons that he has used. It is the history of tens of thousands of people who died a horrible, horrible death. It is a history that the United Nations is on the verge of choosing to ignore. Maybe the United Nations should ask any historian anywhere in the world, forget the United States, ask anywhere else in the world if they think history will repeat itself.

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Fortunately, we have a President who has built a coalition throughout this world. This is not America standing alone. This is America standing with many countries throughout the world, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, many, many different countries throughout the world.

So, okay, United Nations, maybe you are going to be a paper tiger, but we are convinced that history will repeat itself with Saddam Hussein, and we are at the end of our game. Even if it costs us some of our brave young men and women, we are willing to put the lives of our country's citizens on the line to stop this murderer. When duty calls, the United States under the leadership of our President and these other countries, the leadership of Tony Blair and the United Kingdom, et cetera, et cetera, have answered the call.

We are begging the United Nations answer the call while you have the opportunity. Come out of the foxhole. You have an obligation to get onto the field. We must stop history from repeating itself.

I could not speak with more serious or somber attitude than I am speaking to you this evening. Standing right in front of us is the history. We know the history. This inventory that Saddam Hussein has admitted himself is not a made-up inventory. Those are very, very lethal weapons. It is not like a single shot from a rifle where there is one victim. One vial of these inventories that Saddam Hussein has admitted to having, one vial can wipe out an entire community. History shows time and time and time and time and time and time again, this madman has used these weapons of mass destruction and killed thousands, tens of thousands of people.

Yet we have people of sound mind who stand back and put their hands over their eyes and pretend that history will not repeat itself, that pretend that the cancer does not exist and this is somehow going to go away if we try to appease the madman. If we say give

us a little of that inventory at a time, we will be satisfied with your word that you will not attack, that history will not repeat itself.

I will tell Members what the United Nations is doing. They are making a bet, and anyone that supports allowing this madman to continue down his path, they are making a long bet. They are making a bet that the odds are so stacked against them that most of us would consider it a bet of insanity. It is a bet that no one in Las Vegas, no one that gambles, nobody that has ever gambled would ever take with the odds that face these people that do not want to stop this madman by military conflict, if necessary.

It is a bet that is based on the premise, it is a bet that is based on the premise that history will not repeat itself, and that this madman all of a sudden has turned a new leaf and that this madman all of a sudden wants to join the world community and is a man of integrity now and a man of honesty.

I am telling Members those that are making that bet, they are not just going to lose, you are making this bet on behalf of the entire world. And unfortunately, if we lose the bet because history repeats itself, we all lose. Tens of thousands, probably hundreds of thousands of people will have their lives snuffed out because of a foolish, foolhardy bet that has been made.

Everyone of us in this Chamber and everybody in an elected office or an office of leadership in this world, the time has arrived to stand up. The time has arrived to come out of the foxhole fighting. The time has arrived to make sure that we address the fact that history will repeat itself.

We have an opportunity today to, in my opinion, save hundreds, maybe hundreds of thousands, of people. It is not the only problem that we have out there. Sure, we have a problem with North Korea, and we have economic problems. We have the AIDS problem. But I am telling Members the problem that I think is the biggest threat is the one with the highest probability of repeating itself in history, and that is Saddam Hussein and the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the leaders of our country, including my colleagues in Congress who had enough guts to stand up and say enough is enough. But I am telling those people who are betting that history will not repeat itself, in my opinion, and I say this with a great deal of sincerity, and I do not say this with a lot of exaggeration, in my opinion you have let down every human being on the face of the Earth.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. EVERETT (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today after 4:00 p.m. on account of a congressional delegation trip to Afghanistan.